

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 2591

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, YE

SUBJECT: COMMAND COUNCIL ESTABLISHED NEW PRESIDENCY OFFICE;
FORMER DEP PRIMIN ABDALLA BARAKAT APPOINTED DIRECTOR

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. COMMAND COUNCIL CHAIRMAN IBRAHIM AL-HAMDI
ANNOUNCED JULY 24 CREATION OF NEW PRESIDENCY OFFICE WHICH IS TO
HAVE IMPORTANT INFORMATIONAL, LIASON, AND ADVISORY FUNCTIONS.
FORMER DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS, ABDALLA
BARAKAT, WAS NAMED OFFICE DRECTOR JULY 25. END SUMMARY.

2. IN ANNOUNCEMENT WHICH CAME AS A SURPRISE TO MOST OBSERVERS,
COMMAND COUNCIL CREATED NEW AND ENLARGED PRESIDENCY OFFICE WHICH
IS TO BE HEADED BY FUNCTIONARY WITH DEPTY PRIME MINISTER RANK.
DIRECTOR'S CHIEF ASSISTANT WILL, IN TURN, BE ACCORDED MINISTERIAL
RANK. OFFICE WILL BE EXPANDED VERSION OF FORMER PRESIDENCY WHOSE
SKELETAL FRAMEWORK HAS CONTINUED FUNCTIONING SINCE JUNE 1974 MILITARY
TAKEOVER. AMONG THE SPECIAL DIVISIONS WHICH WILL BE CREATED
AS PART OF ENLARGED PRESIDENCY ARE SECTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENTAL AFFAIRS

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SERVICES, INTERNAL AFFAIRS, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, CULTURAL
AND INFORMATION AFFAIRS, AUDITING DEPARTMENT, AND FINANCIAL
AND ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION.

3. NEW PRESIDENCY OFFICE WILL, ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL
ANNOUNCEMENT, HAVE FOLLOWING FUNCTIONS --
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A) TO PREPARE STUDIES AND CONDUCT RESEARCH AS RELATED TO

THE PRESIDENCY OFFICE;

B) TO COORDINATE WITH AND SERVE AS LIASON TO LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS CONFEDERATION OF YEMEN DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATIONS AND THE SUPREME REFORM COMMITTEE;

C) TO ADVISE PRESIDENT ON ALL STATE POLICIES AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT;

D) TO FOLLOW UP LAWS AND OTHER MATTERS OF GOVERNMENTAL CONCERN.

4 NAMED AS FIRST DIRECTOR ON JULY 25 WAS ABDALLA HUSAYN BARAKAT, A RECENT DEPUTY PRIMIN FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS(AND MAY 1976 LEADER GRANTEE) WHO WAS REMOVED FROM HIS POST FEBRUARY 25, 1976. NR FURTHER APPOINTMENTS HAVE AS YET BEEN MADE.

5. HAMDI IS MOVING IN PREDICTABLE MANNER TO STRENGTHEN HIS CONTROL OVER GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS. HE ALSO HOPES NEW OFFICE WILL SCREEN SOME OF THE TIME-CONSUMING TRIVIA WHICH NOW REACH HIM THROUGH THE HIGHLY INFORMAL SYSTEM OF ACCESS WHICH PREVAILS IN YEMEN.

5. COMMENT. CREATION OF NEW OFFICE CAME NEVERTHELESS AS A SURPRISE WITH MANY OFFICIALS QUESTIONING THE RATIONAL. FUNCTIONS OF NEW OFFICE AS ANNOUNCED THOUGHT BY SOME TO BE SUPERFLUOUS, AND WHILE YARG NOT NOTABLY EFFICIENT IN MANY OF ITS OPERATIONS, COUNCIL OF MINISTERS SYSTEM UNDER PRIME MINISTER ABD AL-GHANI HAS WORKED EELL OVER PAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS.

6. APPOINTMENT OF BARAKAT-- AN ABLE AND AMBITIOUS ZAYDI POLITICIAN -- ALSO SURPRISING. BARAKAT'S RELATIONS WITH AL-HAMDI PRIOR TO HIS FEBRUARY REMOVAL AS DEP PRIMIN WERE NOT INTIMATE, AND THERE WERE REPORTS OF FRICTION. EVEN MORE TELLING WAS BARAKAT'S OBVIOUSLY POOR WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRIME MINISTER WHICH WAS ONE OF LEADING REASONS FOR HIS FALL FROM POWER. THIS ADDITION OF AN ADDITIONAL LAYER OF YARG BUREAUCRACY WEAKENS ROLE OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS SYSTEM WHICH ABD AL-GHANI LARGELY RE-ORGANIZED AND RE-VITALIZED AND MAY HAVE EROSIVE EFFECT ON HIS OWN POSITION. BARAKAT HAS GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH EMBASSY, PARTLY AS RESULT OF HIS CHILDREN IN AMERICAN SCHOOL HERE AND PARTLY BECAUSE OF DEEP IMPACT WHICH RECENT VISIT TO US AS LEADER GRANTEE MADE ON BARAKAT.
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